

S O M E
REMARKS
ON THE GREAT AND UNUSUAL
DARKNESS.

That appeared on FRIDAY, May 19, 1780.

Which alarmed Thousands, and excited a few of the Learned to make some *very curious Observations* — Their Result the Public has perused in Messrs *Gill's* and *Willis's* Papers, viz. That the late Darkness was occasioned by the Smoke of Lurnd Leaves ; which, I think, nothing can be more simple and absurd.

By a FARMER,
In the State of the Massachusetts-Bay.

And it shall come to pass in that Day, saith the LORD GOD, that I will cause the Sun to go down at Noon, and I will darken the Earth in the clear Day. Amos viii. 9.

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SOME REMARKS, &c.

My FRIENDS and COUNTRYMEN,

THE late wonderful and unusual darkness on the nineteenth day of May last, struck the Inhabitants of this State with horror and amazement, and at the same time filled them with alarming apprehensions : Yea the very brutes seemed greatly agitated. If so, could a thinking being set unmoved, while he beheld the Sun, (that splendid luminary, whose bright beams of light afford the utmost joy to the beholder) vail'd in darkness at noon-day ? To view nature dressed in her mourning attire :—The earth enveloped in darkness :—The husbandmen returning from their fields in great surprise :—The midnight centinels crowing in answer to each other :—The dismal din of peeping frogs :—The night-birds singing forth their dreary notes :—The beasts gazing in wild consternation :—Every countenance seemed to gather blackness : Yea, a dismal gloom which filled the beholder with fear and astonishment, waiting with much anxiety for some great event.—In fine, the darkness was such as we nor our fathers never saw its equal.

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THE strange hypothesis of the learned that was put in the Public Papers I cannot agree to, viz. That the great and unusual darkness was occasioned by the smoke of burnt leaves, together with the common exhalations from the earth and water. But if this be true, Why has not that smoke produced such an effect before? Leaves have been burnt, common exhalations have arisen above sixty years to my knowledge, yet they never produced such an effect before. The result of the learned was signed Viator, or Traveller: Had it been. Errans, or Wanderer, it would exactly agreed with their strange opinion.

THIS may convince us, how liable the best of men are to mistakes: How dangerous is it then for u to build our faith on any man's opinion? No wonder the Apostles counselled their hearers, to *search the scriptures, to see if them things were so.*

THIS uncommon darkness was doubtless produced by the intervention of those clouds from the westward, (between the earth and sun;) they first appeared exceeding black, until they were spread over the sun, their color was then changed to a brassy yellow, which doubtless was effected by the rays of light from the sun.—But should any inquire,

quire, Why the vapors, exhalations, &c. never formed clouds with a density sufficient to produce such an effect before? the difficulty will still be as great as ever.

If it be granted (as doubtless it may) that the late darkness of the sun and moon was from the force of natural causes, moving and operating in an unusual manner, or could we investigate ever so many true causes for the solution of this strange phenomenon; yet it will still remain, that the darkness was the LORD's *doings*, and it is *marvellous in our eyes*.

NATURE'S GOD hath given the power of motion and operation to natural causes, and always co-operates with them, otherwise they would effect nothing: *Clouds and darkness are round about him, stormy winds, hail and snow fulfilling his word*. All the elements are at his disposal ready to obey his sovereign command. *He createth darkness, causeth the vapors to ascend, and doth whatsoever he pleaseth*.

As the late darkness must be allowed to be the effect of Divine Power, from hence it follows, that we should take a suitable notice of such a great and memorable event. Not to be moved with such circumstances,

to have no apprehension of danger, must argue the greatest stupidity imaginable. The divine Being has some great and noble end by this dispensation, which becomes us to search out and promote. These things *come not by chance, neither do they arise out of the dust*, but are sent for some valuable purpose, and if we rightly improve them, by the divine blessing, they may be for the general good and happiness of mankind.

THE voice of this dispensation *crieth to the city, it crieth also to the country* : Let all the children of wisdom understand, and attend to it. *The sinners in Zion may well tremble, and fearfulness surprise the hypocrite*, when they behold the operation of his hand, the greatness of his power, from which they can neither hide nor escape.

How solicitous should we be now to acquaint ourselves with that Being who holds the reins of universal government, *so that we may be at peace, that thereby good might come unto us*. How often do remarkable dispensations precede some singular judgment : Though I do not pretend to predict what will follow this, for I am no Prophet, nor do I pretend to any revelation, for I am no Enthusiast ; yet we may rationally conclude, that some singular judgment will follow,

follow, and this may be the very beginning of sorrow.

OUR Savior foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, and the signs of the end of the world, acquaints his auditors some particular signs should precede, viz. wars, earthquakes, signs in the sun and moon, &c. Immediately after the tribulation, the sun was to be darkened ; tribulation is what we have passed through these five years.

OUR enemies have been suffered to ravage our towns ; the fruits of the earth have been cut short by reason of the drought, storms and mildews ; many of us have heard the poor cry for bread, when it was out of our power to relieve them. How many of our young men have been slain in battle ! and our virtuous virgins not given in marriage ! We have beheld with compassion parents bewailing the loss of their children slain, or carried into captivity ; wives lamenting the loss of their tender husbands. Ask the bereaved orphan, and he will tell you with a flood of tears, that his beloved father was slain in battle.

WE have many evidences that these are the latter days, the scriptures are daily literally fulfilling : A day (saith the Prophet
Joel)

Joel) of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness; Prosperity is often expressed by the metaphor of light, and adversity by darkness; the repeating of the synonymous terms is to express the extremity and length of these troubles: *Again, the sun shall be turned into darkness, Zech. xiv. 6, 7. In that day the light shall not be clear nor dark, but it shall be one day known to the LORD, not day nor night, yet it shall come to pass at even time it shall be light* These scriptures may allude to the distresses that were to befall the Jews and the church; yet they are now literally fulfilled

WE have lately passed through an affecting scene, the like I believe has not been since that horrid tragedy was acted, viz. the crucifixion of our LORD and SAVIOR; the sun was then darkened, *Earthquake shut was the sun's glorious eyes, loth to see the LORD of glory die!* saith the Poet. Yea, ~~the~~ rocks rent, the graves opened, and universal nature was in a commotion!

AND should some singular evil follow this dispensation, which we have great reason to expect, what could we look for better than judgment without mercy, while such monstrous wickedness is practised amongst us? What a black catalogue of crimes

crimes are we justly chargeable with ! How is the world idolized ! What covetousness and earthly mindedness abounds, which is death ! What carnal security and stupidity even in professors of religion ! How is God's name and sabbath profaned with indecent behavior, needless travelling, visiting, foolish and profane talking and jesting ! How many needlessly absent themselves from public worship ! How does cheating, lying, abominable extortion, oppression, selfishness and all kinds of dishonesty prevail amongst us ! Parents it seems have forgot their duty ; children daily grow stubborn and rebellious : In fine, true vital piety and morality is banished from amongst us. Our Teachers have forgot the solemn charge to *watch for souls* ! How many discourses do we now hear, only for more salary ! How few of them are enquiring, Whether their labors are crowned with success or not ? Or whether they have won any to CHRIST ? Yes, they seem little concerned for the sheep ; though they see the wolf coming, yet they flee away, and appear more desirous to have their salaries made good than any thing else.

THIS is severe doctrine, but no more so than the truth. Yet, thanks to GOD, this is not the case with all ; I believe there
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are many who are daily at the throne of grace in behalf of their people, desiring that their labor might be crowned with success, who *sigh and cry for the abominations of the land.*

AND shall we, my Countrymen, persist in sin? Is this our returns of gratitude to God for all his benefits and favors bestowed on us? How wonderfully has God delivered us from the hands of our enemies, *(when there was but a step between us and death)* whose tender mercies in many instances have been cruelty. Truly we may say, *had not God been on our side they would have swallowed us up alive.* What large bodies of veteran and disciplined troops, both British and mercenaries, have been sent with the assistance of powerful fleets against our then defenceless coast, the inhabitants undisciplined, unarmed, unexperienced, yea destitute of almost every thing necessary for war, and contemptible in the eyes of our enemies: Yet God has humbled their pride, preserved us and oftentimes given us victory both by sea and land, and caused large quantities of their interest to fall into our hands. He has also called upon us in many instances and ways to return to him, by providences, deaths of friends and connexions, by alarming judgments: Yet, like the deaf

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adder,

adder, we have stopped our ears, hardened our hearts ; like *Ammon* of old have trespassed yet *more and more*. Be astonished O heavens at this ! Here is ingratitude without a parallel : Yea, the sun at noon-day hides his face as if unwilling to behold such monstrous wickedness. *Ob ! Backsliding New-England*, attend now to the *things which belong to your peace before they are forever hid from your eyes*.

WHAT great reason have we to bless and praise him who sent the late darkness, that he suffered it to extend no further, that it only terrified and did not destroy. How deplorable must our condition have been had it continued for a few days. Who of us expected such a day in the morning we went forth to labor in our fields ? But soon the western clouds vail'd the sun ! Darkness overspread the earth ! And while we were crying peace to ourselves, sudden destruction seemed ready to break upon us ! But this may afford us consolation, that all the trouble and affliction we meet with in this world are under the direction of a kind Providence, and if we rightly improve them we have reason to hope they will be sanctified unto us for our best good ; and be a means of

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convincing and converting sinners, and exciting Christians to holiness.

My Countrymen, We have lately been carried through a short and unexpected night, and the shadow of death is turned into the morning, and we have another opportunity to repent. Such an unusual judgment is sufficient to convince us that God is angry, and if we turn not he will perhaps destroy us, or give us up to *hand-
nells of heart, to treasure up to ourselves
wrath against the day of wrath.* Let us often call to mind the thoughts which in that dismal hour possessed our breasts; some apprehended the bridegroom was coming, and soon expected to see the Heavens on fire over their heads, and the great cause of all approaching to take vengeance on them who had not obeyed his Gospel. Did we find ourselves prepared for such a great event as some imagined was coming upon us? Was the prospect delightful and joyous? Could we then heartily welcome the grim messenger Death, desiring to be loosed from this body of clay? Again did we judge ourselves prepared to stand before the Judge of all the earth? Doubtless this was the case with some. But were there not a far greater number who shrunk back and were filled
with

with horror at the thoughts of death and entering into eternity. Did not many then wish they had attended to the one thing needful, and had been true Christians? Some perhaps were on their knees begging for longer time: If so, how should such improve this present opportunity: God has been better to them than their fears, and granted their request; let such see to it that they harden not their hearts like wicked *Pharaoh* as soon as he saw there was respite. And may this dispensation excite us to put off the works of darkness, to be sober and vigilant; preparing for death and judgment which are hastening upon us, and let all Christians be daily entreating that God who has all power in his hand, that he would appear for us, and build up his cause and interest throughout the world; that dying and decaying Religion might revive and flourish, and that he would *visit this vine, which his own right hand hath planted; whose hedges seem to be broken down and given up to the boar of the wilderness.*

AGAIN, let us be prepared to meet God in whatever way he is pleased to meet with us, and may we be prepared for departing out of this world; may we consider it as not our home, that we are only probationers:

ers: May we be reconciled to **GOD**, through **CHRIST**, having a part in the merits of his death and suffering ; so that *when He shall appear, who is the believers life, we may appear also with him in glory* : May we be seeking nearer communion with him : May we strive to be assimilated into the Divine likeness : May we behave ourselves becoming Christians. Let us lay aside all evil speaking, backbiting, flandering and making rules for our neighbors, which we ourselves would not be willing to attend to. Finally, *Let us strive to live in peace, so that the GOD of peace may be with us always* ; by which we shall be enabled in the midst of that amazing scene of a dissolving world, when our ears will be saluted with the dismal sound of rending rocks ! quaking earth ! bursting tomb ! and dissolving nature ! to stand forth unmoved with calmness and serenity of mind, saying, *This is our GOD, we have waited for him, now we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.*

LASTLY, May we take a suitable notice of the late dispensation, and let us turn to that **GOD** from whom we have so greatly revolted and fallen, so that he may be at peace, and his blessing may descend and rest upon us, even life forevermore.

A M E N.

A SCRIPTURAL ACCOUNT of the uncommon DARKNESS that happened in New-ENGLAND, on FRIDAY, May 19. 1780.

LOVING BROTHERS, BOSTON, May, 80.

IN as much as we have so many undeniable proofs that the day of the LORD draws near, I think it is more certified to us in the sun, moon and stars all being smitten at once, which no writing, that I ever found, gave any account of such a thing, before May 19, 1780; neither can I find but one day and night of that uncommon darkness mentioned in Scripture, before CHRIST's second coming—That these few lines may be a warning and comfort to you, is the hearty wish of your loving Brother,

JOHN KENNEDY.

I Begin at *Isaiah* xiii. and 6th verse—
Howl ye, for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. V. 10. For the stars of Heaven, and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: The sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.—*Ezek.* xxxii. 7. And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the Heaven, and make the stars thereof dark: I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light.—*Joel* ii. 31. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great
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and terrible day of the LORD come —iii. 15.
 The sun and the moon shall be darkned, and
 the stars shall withdraw their shining. — ~~Amos~~
 v. 16, 17, 18. Therefore the LORD the God
 of hosts, the LORD saith thus, Wailing shall
 be in all streets, and they shall say in all the
 high ways, Alas, alas ! And they shall call
 the Husbandmen to mourning, and such as
 are skilful of lamentation to wailing ; which
 may be referred to the 19th of May, 1780,
 as it was the case in most towns in this State.
 And in all vineyards shall be wailing : For I
 will pass through thee saith the LORD. Wo
 unto you that desire the day of the LORD :
 To what end is it for you ? The day of the
 LORD is darkness, and not light. 20. Shall
 not the day of the LORD be darkness and
 not light ? Even very dark, and no brightness
 in it ? — *Mat. xxiv. 7.* For nation shall rise
 against nation and kingdom against king-
 dom : And there shall be famines, and pesti-
 lences, and earthquakes in divers places. 8.
 All these are the beginning of sorrows. 10.
 Then shall many be offended, and betray
 one another, and shall hate one another. 11.
 And many false prophets shall arise, and
 shall deceive many. 24. For there shall arise
 false christs, and false prophets, and shall
 shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that
 (if it were possible) they shall deceive the
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very elect. 25. Behold I have told you before 29. Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from Heaven, and the powers of Heaven shall be shaken. 33. So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things know that it is near, even at the doors. 44. Therefore be ye also ready : For in such an hour as you think not, the Son of Man cometh.—*Mark xiii. 24 25.* But in those days, after the tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light. And the stars of Heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in Heaven shall be shaken. 28 29. Now learn a parable of the fig-tree : When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves ye know that summer is near : So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors. *Luke xxi. 25.* And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars ; and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring. 33. Heaven and earth shall pass away ; but my words shall not pass away. 35. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.—*1 Thes. v. 3, 4.* For when they shall say, Peace and safety ; then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child ; and they shall not escape. But ye, Brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. *Rev. viii. 12, 13.* And the fourth Angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars ; so as the third part of them were darkened : And the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. And I beheld, and heard an Angel flying through the midst of Heaven, saying, with a loud voice, Wo, wo, wo, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three Angels which are yet to sound.